

*AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS*

*This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.*

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) An earplug comprising:

a plug member for blocking a person's ear canal, said plug member comprising at least one acoustic channel for channeling incoming acoustic energy into said person's ear;

a detector for detecting an acoustic energy level or for detecting a control signal that is indicative of an acoustic energy level to be received;

an acoustic valve positioned in said acoustic channel; and

a control unit that, in response to an acoustic level sensed by said detector, controls actuation of said acoustic valve between a pass-through position with a low attenuation and an attenuating position;

The earplug according to claim 1, wherein said valve comprises a valve seat and a valve member, wherein the valve member is actuated by the control unit and wherein the valve seat comprises a body of micro-channels.

4. (Previously presented) The earplug according to claim 3, wherein the body of microchannels comprises a wiring mesh.

5. (Previously presented) The earplug according to claim 3, wherein the valve member comprises a flexible foil closing said valve seat.

6. (Previously presented) The earplug according to claim 3, wherein said valve seat and said valve member each comprise an electrode for providing electrostatic attraction.

7. (Previously presented) The earplug according to claim 3, wherein at least one of either the valve seat and/or valve member are actuated by a piezo-element.

8. (Currently Amended) The earplug according to claim [[1]] 3, wherein, said valve is maintained at a specified attenuating position when said control unit is inactive.

9. (Currently Amended) The earplug according to claim [[1]] 3, wherein said acoustic valve and said detector are comprised in a modular housing that is insertable in the acoustic channel of said plug member.

10. (Currently Amended) The earplug according to claim [[1]] 3, wherein the control signal is an acoustic signal.

11. (Currently Amended) The earplug according to claim [[1]] 3, wherein said detector comprises a microphone.

12. (Previously presented) A modular housing to be fitted in an acoustic channel of an ear plug, the modular housing comprising:

    a detector for detecting an acoustic energy level or for detecting a control signal that is indicative for an acoustic energy level to be received;

    an acoustic valve to be positioned in said channel; and

    a control unit that, in response to an acoustic level sensed by said detector, controls actuation of said acoustic valve between a pass-through position with low attenuation and an attenuating position.

13. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 12, wherein said detector is positioned on a mid-ear side of the acoustic valve.

14. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 12, wherein said valve comprises a valve seat and a valve member, wherein the valve member is actuated by the control unit and wherein the valve seat comprises a body of micro-channels.

15. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 14, wherein the body of micro-channels comprises a wiring mesh.

16. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 14, wherein the valve member comprises a flexible foil closing said valve seat.

17. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 14, wherein said valve seat and said valve member each comprise an electrode for providing electrostatic attraction.

18. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 14, wherein at least one of either the valve seat and/or valve member are actuated by a piezo-element.

19. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 12, wherein, said valve is maintained at a specified attenuating position when said control unit is inactive.

20. (Previously presented) The modular housing according to claim 12, wherein said detector comprises a microphone.